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Policies of Inclusion of Disabled Students in Russia

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1. Summary.

One of some important changes in Russian educational system for the last decade of developments was an attempt to improve the access to higher education for disabled people for widening their participation in social life. However, this process is still at the initial stage and many problems in social and educational policies have not been addressed. Legislation concerning social protection and employment for disabled people are insufficient. Government does not provide enough support, for example financial and medical support for disabled people to be self-sufficient. There is very limited access to professional training and employment for them. However this is a problem of complex rehabilitation of a huge number of people. According to statistics, there are 11-15 million disabled people in Russia, that is more then 10% of entire population. Approximately 700 000 of them are children and young adults through the age of 18.

In Russia higher education provides an essential opportunity for independence and self-sufficiency for all people, including disabled people. Having higher education diploma is crucial in getting job in Russia. With respect to disabled people, amongst those who are employed (13-15% of the disabled people population), sixty percent of them are having higher education diploma (Perspektiva, 2003). Currently the participation of disabled in higher education is increasing. In 2001 there were about 5400 disabled students in 259 higher education institutions, and in 2002-2003 the number is more then 14.5 thousands (Russian Ministry of Education, 2003). There are 335 higher education institutions, and 229 of them train disabled students. However the percentage is lower compared to non-disabled disabled people. From the total number of students of higher schools in the Russian system of education, the part of the disabled students is 0.4%, for middle professional schools it is 10.180 from 2.448.532, which is 0.42%.

Clearly, the problem requires attention. There were some publications on the issue during the last decade. They represent some innovative elaborations and need to be considered and applied. But they were mostly in social and pedagogical aspects (curriculum development, educational organization, pedagogical and rehabilitation techniques), whereas the policy and philosophy of inclusiveness is still in the beginning of development and has to be improved. There is a big lack of information on all the stages. There is no special legislation elaborated, there are few projects on the problem, provided by the government. Therefore an initiative is currently coming mostly from universities teachers, who directly face the difficulties of inclusiveness processes, and from non-governmental organizations for the disabled. Naturally because of the lack of means, these researches are fragmental, non-systematic and poorly distributed. Often it may be tens exemplars, left in the university library, very rarely are they available on the Internet.

Rarely is there a possibility to get international experience to make comparative analysis and challenge important inherited features of the domestic policies. Besides, there is sometimes sensitive inconsistency between universities official reports and information given by students. Some research has been undertaken with the support of the Open Society Institute, investigating reforms in higher education and problems of inclusiveness ([8], [12], [16]). But this research did not cover such an important problem as the position of disabled people in higher education.

This paper is the first attempt to provide an analysis the situation of inclusiveness in higher education in Russia, synthesizing the existing separated results in Russia and considering some international theoretical and practical policy experience. It concentrates on the last decade as the most active and substantial on the issue, and touches mostly policy and social aspects of the problem. The historical and cultural aspects require extra time resources and need to be explored in future projects.

The methodology of the research was determined by different specifics of the circumstances such as the size of the country, number of higher schools, little information available, lack of organizational units responsible for information about disabled students in the universities and often resistance to share such information. Therefore the following strategy was chosen: to find all possible relevant researches, statistics, publication and books, to pick a number of the most representative cases as in Moscow, S-Petersburg as the most secured and successful places, Novosibirsk is educational centre in Siberia, and at the same time, remote from the centre place. The main guiding questions were “Who is included/excluded in higher education system in Russia and why? What efforts have been taken to improve the situation and what can be said about their effectiveness?” The research stages are higher schools, subjects – 1) students with disabilities, 2) main stream students, 3) administrators and teachers working for inclusive/special education.

2. Background.

In order to understand the current situation of inclusiveness in higher education in Russia it is useful to consider some background origins of traditional educational policy. Its roots are in soviet ideology of 60s-70s and concern two most important slogans. One of them is equality of rights and opportunities of soviet citizens. According to it, education was established as free, social and financial status of parents was not essential, province and friendly soviet republics were provided by quite good educational opportunities. To support the former aim there was a system of “blind” distribution of university graduates to these regions. Young specialists were sent to various remote cities and encouraged by social benefits. Thanks to this “compulsion for welfare” policy the level of knowledge was equal around the whole country.

Presumably, it was a good moment to spread these inclusive processes to the category of disabled people. But the other opposite ideologies prevented this from happening. Another ideological principal represented socialist perfectionism and emphasized as “overtake the West”. “Socialistic competition” at all the levels in professional, educational and social activity of the country was one of the most important disciplinary and labor productivity ideological tools. In the educational sphere it involved a well-elaborated system of school and university competitions (Olympiads) on all the levels from class to republic, devoted in common to mathematical and natural sciences. This system provided selection of the most talented children through all the levels of schooling, providing future rich intellectual and scientific basis for the country.

Regrettably, the category of the disabled people did not pass through the bottleneck in this race for the best abilities, except for maybe a few cases ([13]). Besides selection, which is in principal a contradiction to inclusiveness, the soviet “perfectionism” tended to hide all the less perfect things, and disability as well. It stressed soviet society as always healthy and active. The theme of disability was neglected in public communication, media and so on.

Consequently, a decision about education for disabled people was made in favor of special education. This separated disabled people from society and influenced future cultural and social attitudes. Now as a result we have a very difficult situation with millions of disabled people, experiencing discrimination through the economic crisis in the country.

The economic crisis in the country and culturally formed negative attitudes to disabled people create obstacles for inclusiveness in higher education at all the levels and aspects such as ineffective and contradictory legislation, architect-technical and informational inaccessibility of education, passivity and inadequate self-estimation of disabled students, resistance of universities to accept inclusiveness. To begin to recognize and engage into these problems it is necessary to consider in details what is going on in the higher education system at different levels, and first at all on the level of organization and legislation.

3. Russian system of higher education and people with disabilities.

One of the most noticeable specifics of the Russian educational system in comparison to some Western countries is that there is no unified centralized test for validation and certification of educational level. Despite the receiving of having a higher school certificate when applying to university, all applicants have to pass entrance examinations. They are normally two or three on the subject of a department and one common subject like an essay. The content of exams is different for every year and every university, but in principal similar. All the tests from the previous years are available at the Entrance Committee Service; therefore everybody can use them for preparation.

These entrance requirements necessarily create a competition that makes it more difficult for disabled people to apply. The government has provided a legislation to support them in this situation, but it is quite problematic. According to the Law of Russian Federation "About Education" 12.06.1992 N3266-1 "children with disabilities (the 1st and 2nd groups of severity) have the right to apply to a state or municipal educational institutions of middle and higher professional education without competition if they pass successfully the entrance exams and if an individual rehabilitation program is compatible with studying in these institutions". This means that such applicants will be accepted if they pass the exams with the mark "satisfactory", meanwhile the others will compete with each other and the best will be accepted. This raises several issues.

On the one hand it gives a chance to children with disabilities to get professional education in the circumstances of competitive system. On the other hand, this is a positive discrimination in fact: some mainstream applicants may be better in exams and not be accepted, whereas applicants with special needs with just satisfactory knowledge will take their places. On the social level, this encourages a specific attitude towards disabled students as weak and helpless. Disabled students, in their turn, constantly adopt thinking about themselves as unable and dependent. Such applicants are sure about the advantages they will have, and sometimes do not exercise enough, become accustomed to the idea that they have to be supported and thus always have some kind of discount. After graduating they, as a rule, are not ready for the reality of the labor market and are not competitive enough, because they were always asked for lower requirements at the educational level, this advantage often decreases the level of knowledge of disabled students. In some sense, it is education just for education: graduates are not trained adequately to become professionals. As a result, this law, despite the idea of increasing possibilities for disabled students, continues the policy of exclusiveness.

Unfortunately at the moment it is difficult to discard this order, because the rest of the system of accepting students with disabilities to universities is far from being perfect. The Vice-chairman State Duma Committee on Culture, Science and Education, Smolin O.N., who is blind, insists in his report (All Russian Conference "Equal Rights for Invalids", 2002) that this rule to accept children with disabilities without competition is necessary because the social inequality is too heavy in Russia. Specifically, there is a big inequality among students, which are dependant on their parents' income. He called this law "liberties for the sake of equal opportunities."

Meanwhile, possible changes coming in the future may even make the situation worse. Now a new educational program is under discussion. According to this program, the final exam for all schools will be unified (look official informational web page of United State Exam www.ege.edu.ru). The experiment was started in 2001 in 250 universities of Russia. It aimed to equalize the opportunities for city and countryside children to enter any chosen universities, even prestigious ones. According to the new rules, this test will be valid during one year after graduating from school and will be equal to higher school entrance examinations. If the applicant does not enter university in the first year after school he/she will have to pass it again.

Of course, it is to resolve some problems the applicants face when they apply to university. At the end of school, children have to pass a final exam and then again the same entrance exam for university. It involves a lot of stress and financial expenses on tutoring, flights, accommodation and so on. The new systems must minimize this. But for children with disabilities from the specialized schools with the shorted program it will be quite difficult. It is also assumed in the

new educational program a fellowship (a stipend) will depend on the results on the exam. Apparently, it may be more difficult for disabled students to enter university and to get a fellowship because sometimes they need extra time to learn, and extra protection. In this respect, the existing entrance advantages look reasonable.

This problematic issue of free-of-competition entrance for applicants with disabilities influences principally relationships between students and universities. The law puts universities in a problematic position between two kinds of responsibilities. The first one is an obligation to accept and support (there are also some quantitative requirements for universities to accept such students, about 2% of the whole number of students; this is not in the law, but is set by the Ministry of Education in special annual requirement letters). Second, is an educational quality norm. There are the State standards of knowledge evaluation, which every university has to fulfill. Besides in the competitive system described above, all the universities tend to keep their rating and prestigious status, which is traditionally determined by the quality of educational training.

This problem is resolvable if there are appropriate recourses available: such as accessible environment, technical equipment, specifically trained specialists. But as was mentioned previously, actualization of the problem of inclusiveness overlaps with the economical problems of the country. The buildings are not accessible and now universities have to start a complete reconstruction from the very beginning, which is very expensive. Meanwhile the state budget for education is very modest. Besides, according to the Law of Russian Federation "About Higher and Post-higher Professional Education" from 22.08.1996 with amendments from 25.06.2002, 'invalids' of the 1st and 2nd groups, day form students, have right for the extra 50% of the fellowship for the mainstream students and according to the regulation about the stipend and other financial support of the students of professional education from 27.07.2001, they have right for social fellowship, which is paid independently of studying success". Plus, according to the letter of the State Committee of Higher Education Russian Federation of 18.08.1994, student-'invalids' of 1st and 2nd groups, are recommended to be free of accommodation fees. That means that the university pays for the dormitory for these students. Therefore, in terms of the financial aspect it is a task for the university to find these means from its own budget, which is normally very modest.

This financial aspect necessarily influences other levels of accepting disabled applicants. It is understandable that in these circumstances universities are not interested in attracting people with special needs to apply to university. Moreover, they find some compromising ways, namely, using these two points written in the law. First is "out-of-competition acceptance if applicant passes exams successfully." As far as some exams are oral, examinations may be extra strict for these students and underestimate their answer, and this kind of violation is difficult to argue at the formal level. Incidentally, this over strictness is quite rare comparing to the opposite situations, when the majority of disabled applicants have such a low level of preparation that they have to be overestimated to pass even for "satisfactory".

The medical commission may also be an obstacle. Despite it has to be only a recommendation to not study at this particular university or department, sometimes bureaucrats use it as a rule. Because of these subjective moments at the entrance process, some students try to hide their impairment, if it is possible. This automatically cancels all the financial advantages they can get if they show their real health status. This tendency is difficult to trace in terms of numbers particularly because students tend to hide it, but the fact is well known among students and people who work with them. One girl in my level kept hidden her epilepsy at the entrance commission. There is a well-known phenomenon for psychological departments when applicants with mental disabilities tend to study psychology because they want to help themselves.

Lack of initiative of universities to accept disabled applicants results in a lack of information about possibilities, secured by the law. For example, that disabled students of the 1st and 2nd groups of severity have the right for additional time and additional accompaniment at exams.

Therefore, the legislation requires also financial, social and informational background. It must be compatible with current circumstances and cover all the important aspects of reality in the issue.

Introduction of a New Law.

Imperfection of the legislation about higher education for disabled people reasonably has led to demand for change. Financial problems are also an obstacle in this process. There was an attempt to introduce the law "About Education for People with Limited Possibilities." This law was elaborated in 1994-95 and was twice accepted by State Duma and was approved by Soviet Federation in 1996 and 1999, but it was twice declined by president Eltsin.

There are three main points in it. First, it must provide full social security from the State for all students with special needs. It will protect them in the current tendency to make change for education. The schools and universities admissions sometimes try to stimulate the parents to pay for education for their children. Second, it must regulate the financial mechanism. Nowadays, the majority of schools for children with special needs are supported by municipal administration: city, regional and so on. This is not enough. The State should finance education in general and education for people with disabilities. Third, according to opinion of deputy Smolin O.N., Russia has chosen an intermediate model, which means a combination of integrative education and special education. "We choose way of reformation instead of complete decline of special education. We keep special education institutions in legislation, and at the same time, we open a way for integrative education".

The main issue about the new law is whether to regulate the questions of education for people with disabilities by a specific law or by other means. The deputy Smolin O.N. thinks, that it must be a law, because it is more effective than any other regulatory means, it concerns the interests of about 5 millions people (children and students with disabilities) plus their parents, teachers and so on. At the moment, the main reason to delay an acceptance of the law for the government is financial responsibility - the law requires money to be accepted and be realized.

Problems with pre-university training – schools.

In considering higher education it is important to consider some aspects of pre-university education policy. Traditionally pre-university education for children with disabilities in Russia is mostly special. According to recent statistics, (Perspectiva, 2003) 66% of young people with disabilities received their school certificates out of mainstream school. The majority of disabled children, ages 7-18 (approximately 550,000), are isolated in their homes, segregated in specialized institutions, or receive no education at all. Approximately 22% of disabled children are in mainstream schools and boarding schools ("internats") including 5% who study at home. Another 11% are in specialized schools and institutions for disabled children, and 0.02% are in specialized vocational schools run by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. Consequently, according to these statistics, the rest of the children, more than 50%, receive no education at all (Perspectiva, 2003). The level of education in special schools and home education is lower than the state standards and allows continuing education in higher schools and universities only with enormous efforts. Research by the nongovernmental organization "Perspectiva" in the 8 regions of Russia showed the list of crucial problems in school for achievement disabled children:

- parents practically do not have information about the rights for education for their children;
- general accessibility of buildings and transport is absent;
- the majority of schools staff are not competent in the questions of education for children with disabilities;
- only children with easy impairments are able to study in mainstream schools.

As a result of this organization of school training, young disabled people are not prepared for entering the university or middle professional school, and it is almost impossible for them to find a job after school. Moreover, these children, who are not learning social or communication skills, are at a huge disadvantage to their peers. Although according to answers of the majority of

young people with disabilities (60 from 100) would prefer to study in mainstream schools, educational institutions are still inaccessible for them.

The problem of school training for disabled children is closely tied with parents' position. The majority of parents do not have information about their children rights. Therefore they normally fully trust teachers and doctors. Parents do not have skills to defend their children rights and have a preoccupation that their children are forbidden to be among the other coevals. The situation is caused by traditional social perceptions of disabled children as necessarily isolated from the society. Nevertheless, the situation is slowly changing. Parents now are more involved in social organizations and as it showed in research (Martinova, 2000), most of them want their children to obtain higher education training.

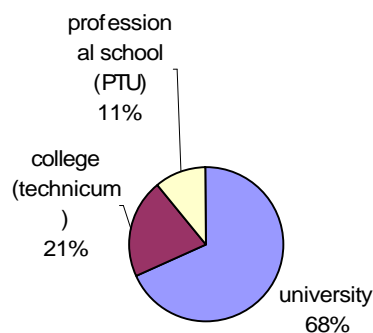
University level.

The situation of school segregation impacts on the university level. Despite the existing legislation, concerning the education of disabled children, universities principally, like schools, do not accept the idea of inclusive education. The primary and secondary school directly influences further education: without qualitative knowledge, school certificate and self-sufficiency it is impossible to apply university. Only a few young people decide to go to university. Studying is a difficult process for disabled students. Not many universities have special services for such students. Buildings, libraries, dormitories, as well as transport are not accessible for people with disabilities; technical support is very poor.

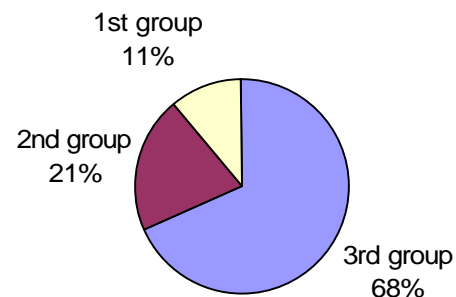
The negative heritage of segregated school and other problems of disabled students are shown in some recent social research on the issue. In 1999, 2002 the Chelyabinsk State University initiated research with the aim of increasing accessibility of higher education for the people with physical disabilities in the region. The research shows that the economic crisis in the country first of all influenced socially weak groups of people, including people with disabilities. Already by the age of 18 more than half of them are excluded from social activity: work or study. But the majority of them, 2/3 young disabled people, want to have professional education and their parents approve of their desire.

300 disabled students at the age before 31 were interviewed: 56% women; 44% men.

Professional institution type



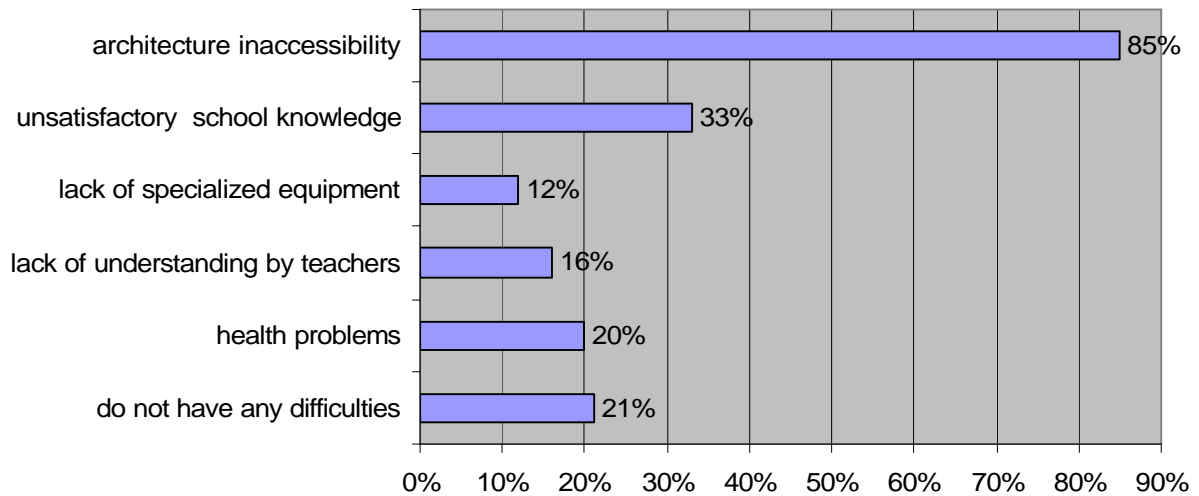
Impairment severity range (increasing severity 3 to 1)



It is evident from the last diagram that the majority of the interviewed students are of the lightest group of impairment, whereas the heavier groups' participation is limited. The main reasons are weak training preparation in school, which does not allow passing the entrance university exams and universities do not provide circumstances for studying for disabled students. According to the

research, 50% of disabled students of the 1st group of disability study in universities, 50% in college (*technicum*).

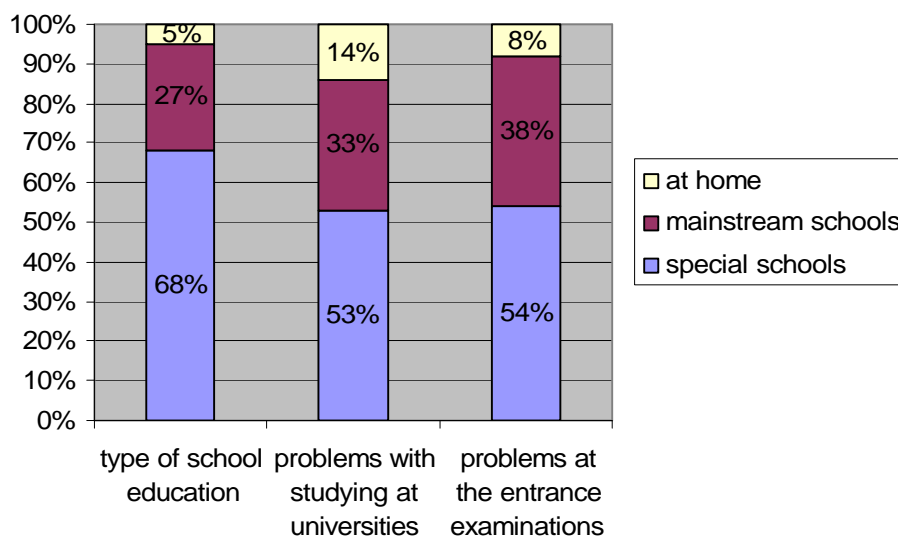
Interviewed students were offered the question “What kind of difficulties you face during your studying?” The following diagram shows the answers.



For the majority of respondents the main problem is architecture inaccessibility. Also, universities do not provide necessary equipment and support for disabled students. Teachers and admissions do not show understanding of the problems. As it was mentioned above, low level of school knowledge makes lots of difficulties for disabled students. Even if they manage to enter a university, the insufficient knowledge they got at school does not allow them to succeed in the studying process.

The following diagram shows percentage of different types of preliminary education and how it results in percentage of students having problems with studying at universities and with entrance examinations. It is clearly that the worse results have those who studied at home. These children are not trained at the proper level and do not achieve social skills, which necessary for inclusive studying. From those students who studied in special school and did not have problems in studying all answered that they had problems with entrance exams.

Type of school education and its impact on further education



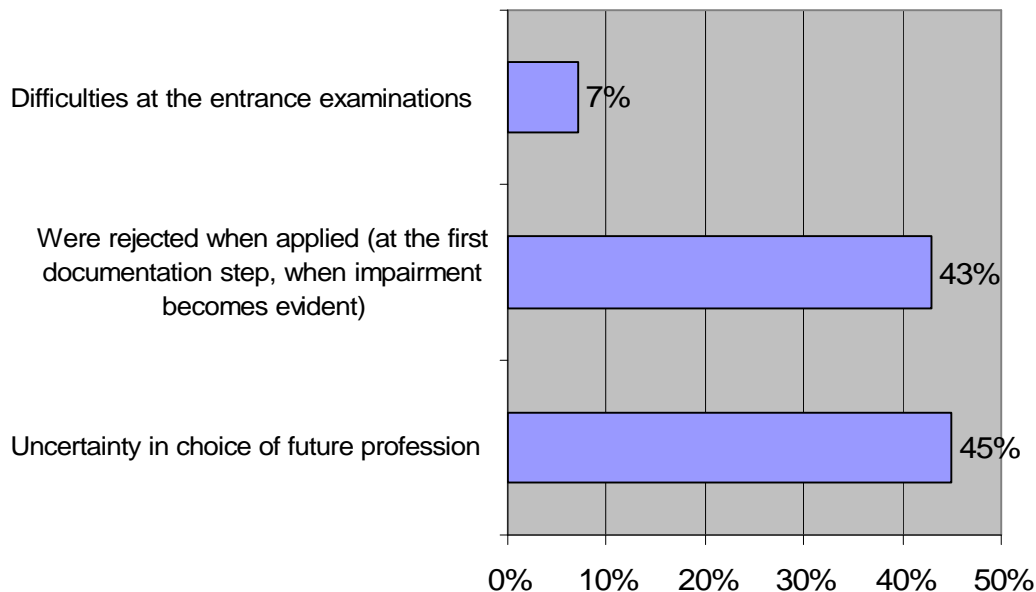
Of students who studied at mainstream schools 67% are disabled in the 3rd disability group, and 33% in the 2nd group. Of those who studied at home, all are in the 2nd severity group. Therefore

all students of the 1st group of severity studied in special schools. It corresponds the common situation that heavy severity disabled children are excluded from mainstream school education and it is transferred to university level.

Definitely exclusive education has some positive sides, especially concerning to health rehabilitation factor. But inclusive education in result is more effective in respect of higher education. This thesis is thoroughly confirmed in the research of inclusive school education by Iarskaya-Smirnova (2002). The following table summarizes students' opinions about advantages and disadvantages of different types of school education.

	advantages	disadvantages
mainstream schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - possibility to study with non-disabled peers; - be equal with the others; - be in collective; - adaptation to independent life; - the same level of knowledge as of the non-disabled peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - difficult program, not taking in account the health state - lack of individual approach because of big number of pupils in the class
in special schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understanding of other students and teachers; - lengthy program, that allows to - accept studying material better; - understanding of the health state; - financial support from the State; - individual approach; - protection of environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - remoteness from home and parents; - limited communication with non-disable people; - lack of common social life experience; - self orientation, introversy; - too much of tutelage.
at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individual schedule of studying - independence in studying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - limit of communication - lack of visual aids and demonstrations

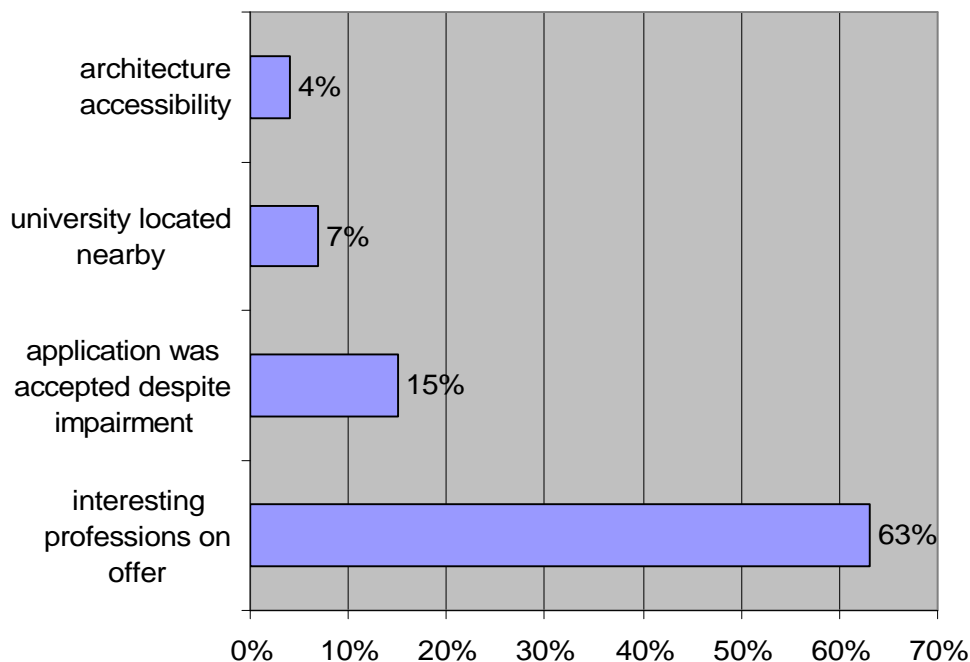
Entering university is a big difficulty for disabled young people in Russia. 57% of interviewed continued their education directly after school. The rest continue education in one, two or three years. The next diagram shows the main reasons of failure at the first attempt:



Despite the fact that university cannot officially reject applicant on grounds of being disabled person, they use negative recommendation of medical examination committee as basis for their final decision.

The large percentage of those uncertain in choice of profession can be explained by the lack of public image of professionally successful disabled person. Neither mass media nor public opinion or their family and educational upbringing inspire active approach of young disabled people to their professional future. Apart from that, universities do not provide information about available options for such students, like accessibility, technical facilities and social and tutoring support. Despite the difficulties experienced, one of the important reasons why the inclusive education has higher value is that it offers broader choice of professions in comparison to special education.

“Why did you choose this particular university?”



Undoubtedly, the lack of money from the government is the most difficult problem, but at least to some extent it may be compensated by the active position of the university administration and student initiative. According to practice, the progress depends a lot on the policy of the university administration. Some universities find resources for inclusiveness in independent organizations or funds. The problem of the low level of the school training for disabled people and the low competitiveness with the mainstream students, has been resolved in such universities as the Institute of Social Rehabilitation of Novosibirsk Technical University or Chelyabinsk State University. They organized preparatory courses to help special schools graduates to improve their knowledge of the mainstream norms. Although the majority of universities do not have such options, they try to resolve them with the help of social organizations, and the activity of the students and administrations. The following examples show a variety of approaches to the problems listed and good lessons to be learned from them.

Case studies: situation at the universities.

It is always important in policy research to learn some direct information from disabled students and those administrative people and teachers who make the policies. It was a valuable experience to visit universities and explore how much attention is paid to the situation of inclusiveness and what is the tendency for future policies of inclusiveness for them. Novosibirsk universities were considered more fully as far as the research and policy recommendations were planned to be focused on the Novosibirsk region.

Moscow State University (MSU).

It is the most prestigious university in Russia. It has an old and stable tradition of inclusive education since the Second World War. Students find the older teachers are more loyal and understanding toward the disabled student. The main categories of disabilities are the blind, wheelchair users, hard of hearing individuals. According to the disabled students' opinion, the university is a good choice because of:

- settled system of inclusiveness;
- students with disabilities get accommodation in the dormitory without problems;
- the Library has a good collection of books in Braille;
- settled system of handing books in Braille among students (spontaneously has been created by students with disabilities);
- students get stipend regularly;
- high rating of the university among others in the country.

However, there are some serious obstacles: the main building is not accessible for wheelchair users; students have to provide a computer or any equipment of their own; some of the teachers do not allow the use of dictaphones during lectures.

Moscow State Technical University by N.E. Bauman (MSTU) was always known as an Engineering University of educational excellence, having a potential for real greatness. At the moment there are 184 students with special needs at the university, which is the highest rate in Moscow. They have an old tradition of accepting such students from 1934.

The main category is deaf students and hard of hearing people. The university is receiving financial support from the government and has very good technical equipment for hard-hearing students. (There are several classrooms equipped with high-frequency apparatuses). Elena Poddimova finished the 1st year of the university. She has a light form of cerebral spastic infantile paralysis and weak hearing. She mentioned that despite these advantages, students not always have special audio accompaniment during classes. Although the university has a status of non-special, deaf students study in special groups.

Moscow State Sociology University (former The Party School). Has its buildings spread all over the city, that makes it difficult to reach for students with vision and movement disorders. There are good ramps and lifts, but the building was constructed long ago, and the corridors in the main building are too narrow for a wheelchair. There are no special groups in the university. Disabled students, who are mostly visually and physically impaired, study together. Vika, a graduate, blind from birth: "May be because this is a sociology university the attitude toward the disabled students is absolutely normal. They have modern view on inclusiveness, broad international relations, and try to improve the educational system according to the modern requirements including needs of the disabled". There is special faculty on Socialization for Invalids and real possibilities for inclusiveness on the PhD program, which Vika is planning to apply.

Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Faculty of Corrective Pedagogy.

Interview with Eremina O.P. I learned about an experiment on development of uninterrupted inclusive vocational technical training for deaf and hard of hearing students. This experiment has been successfully carried on for 9 years and was stopped. I decided to investigate the reasons and went to S. Petersburg. I met one of the initiators of the experiment - Eremina O.P. She presented the results at the international conference 2000, in her monograph 2002 and in her Doctoral thesis. The experiment was initiated on the basis of S. Petersburg Mechanical-Instrumental College in 1992, when the first studying group of students hearing impaired on the specialty of "Electronic and Electric Computer-aided Facilities Production" was organized with the specialization in diagnostics and preparing home electro-equipment. A valuable and broad experience was accumulated. The main reason to stop the practice of inclusive education was financial. Talking more precisely, the problems were the following:

- More difficult work for teachers with the same salary (in special groups teachers have +20%, in mixed groups just normal salary);
- Additional specialists are required – audio support. This specialist must acquire sign language and same time must be aware of the special (electronics) terminology;
- Specialized deductive materials and adopted curriculum is necessary for inclusive program;
- Students require more individual work.

Now people still call to the college asking about application. But the program is closed because it's too problematic for the institute.

Raoul Wallenberg International University for Family and Child in St.Petersburg. Interview with the Dean Mihailova E.V.

This is a private paid university. In contrast to the previous case the Dean said that they do not have too many problems with their disabled students. I asked what was the reason to start this program of inclusiveness: private universities are not obliged to accept the disabled applicants on quota or somehow. "We had a request and found no obstacles to accept these students", - told the Dean Mihailova E.V. The institute offers 16 specialties. Students with disabilities mostly choose "The Special Pedagogic" and "Psychology," that is quite reasonable as far as they may be in a demand. The main category of disabilities is the deaf and hard hearing students but there are also blind students. There is a special device for visually injured students, which helps in readings – a lamp-loop.

Chelyabinsk State University: Support Service for the students with disabilities.

A leader in area of inclusive higher education in Russia is the Chelyabinsk State University. From 1999 they have a Regional Educational Center for People with Disabilities, which was formed with the help of regional administration and European Union program TACIS. The process was started in 1992 with a small group of students with disabilities – soldiers from Afghanistan. In 2002 there were already 161 students with the special needs and 44 potential applicants at the preparatory courses. The building, where the Center is situated, is completely

accessible. The main building with the library and other important classes will be accessible after reconstruction. The Center organized preparatory courses in order to decrease the difference in the educational level of students from the special schools and those from mainstream schools. The first stage - September-November – psychologists and pedagogues help the applicants to accustom the new environment and atmosphere, pace of university life, consultate them in the question of professional orientation, teach necessary computer technologies. The program is specifically adopted according to physical abilities of students. After December exams, the majority of the Center students are accepted to the preparatory courses of the Department of Accessible Education. There they get an intensive training on the school program, stressing the subjects, which are necessary for studying at the university – at the mathematical, philological, historical, economical and psychological departments. In the case of successful passing the final exams (they are equal with the entrance exams to the university), the students of the Center are accepted in the mainstream studying groups. The center is well equipped (comparing to the other Russian universities) with the technique, necessary for studying of the students with physical impairments: computer laboratory, Internet, voice synthesizer, dictaphones, audio lectures.

Novosibirsk State University (NSU).

NSU experience of cooperation in projects for inclusive education is about four years. All this time it was in a tie contact with a non-governmental organization - Center of Independent Life “Finist.” With support of European Committee and cooperation with Technical University of Bordeaux (France), “Finist” and NSU initiated the project “Integration of People with Physical Limits into the System of Higher Education of Novosibirsk State University.” They involved associations “Interactiveservice” (France), “Vocation without limits” (France) and administration of Novosibirsk region.

The university staff accepted the idea of including the group of disabled students with understanding. However, at the beginning of the project, the university had some anxiety, if the disabled students manage to master the demanding program.

Within the project the adaptive environment was created in the university buildings and campus. Necessary technical equipment was secured. Three teachers from the university and two representatives from “Finist” had two-week training in universities of France to learn a new experience of accepting of the disabled students in higher schooling. The experience of collaboration with regional administrative on development of norms and actions for protection the rights and interests of people with disabilities consolidated an official support of the organization and the university. The project helped to further cooperation with administrative structures. The new proposal for the “Program of Educational Process Accompaniment and Technical Maintenance for Students with Special Needs in Educational Institutions” is accepted in the Novosibirsk Administration to be supported.

NSU model of inclusive education for students with special needs.

A specific feature of NSU training system is its continuity. Selection at the pre-university stage (olimpiads, schools by correspondence, preparation courses, NSU sub-units for general middle and middle professional training as the Specialized Scientific Study Center for Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry and Biology Education and Higher College for Information Science), higher professional education, post-university training. Therefore the success of the model of inclusive education in NSU directly depends on how students and applicants with disabilities will adopt the inclusive process at all the stages. During the project NSU concentrated on three objectives: 1) development of the system of pre-university training by increasing the number of open olimpiads, by correspondence and weekends schools, elaboration of distant forms of training; 2) resolving socio-psychological problems of adaptation of recent school pupils, their active participation in educational and social life of the university; 3) development of resources and information base, oriented for the disabled students, and improving architecture accessibility of the university buildings. In the closest future NSU plans to create socio-psychological centre

for students to establish organization for the disabled students, and also to create an analytic centre to accept them.

Technical Adaptative Centre. Interviews with the NSU students with disabilities. The Center was built with the support of the project “Accessible Higher Education in Siberia”. The organizers of the project are Novosibirsk State University, along with universities of St.-Petersburg, Omsk, Krasnoyarsk, Center of Independent Life “Finist” and leading universities of the USA, UK and Australia. Only the last year, due to the project, 13 applicants with disabilities were accepted to the NSU. The Technical Center has the special equipment for the blind and visually impaired, speech synthesizer, tactile keyboard and specialized computer class for the people with cerebral spastic infantile paralysis. There are separate rooms for wheelchair users; the buildings are equipped with ramps. There is also fax-phone with the answering machine that is useful – the students are very communicative.

Svetlana Vasil'eva, the 3d-year student of the Journalistic Department is demonstrating possibilities of the Center: “I can work in Word – I can write, read and edit texts. I prepare all writing assignments here. I can browse in the Internet, check my e-mail”. She is showing how she uses Outlook Express: there are several new messages in her Inbox. She has a lot of friends. “I spend almost all time here after classes”. Svetlana is a good student. She works hard and is proud by herself. “I could be accepted to the department if I had all the marks “3”, but it would be shame. My special boarding-school education was awful, very poor. But I have been studied a lot by myself”. Svetlana plans to receive a good education and work as a radio journalist. She even has some experience on testing as a radio announcer. Svetlana can walk about the university or to the Dormitory alone but she has a lot of friends and feels free to call them for help. Her younger sister Yulia, also blind from the very birth, is applying to the Psychology department and wishing to be accepted.

New Siberian University. Meeting with the rector, Vavilina N.D.

The New Siberian University is a private paid higher school. What possibilities does the New Siberian University offer for the students with disabilities?

“There are several students with light disabilities at the university. It is not a state university, therefore it is not obliged to provide some quota or any exclusive circumstances for them neither for entrance exams, no during the studying. Such people apply and study according the common rules. But the faculty always tries to involve them in the competition for the university sponsors' scholarship. Ennually10% of the students in fact study for free”.

Regional model of professional training for the persons with limited opportunities of health: the Institute of Social Rehabilitation of Novosibirsk State Technical University (ISR NSTU).

The numerical structure of the people with disabilities, living in Novosibirsk area, for 1.01.01 is about 139 thousand people. From them the 1-st (the most heavy) group of severity is more than 12 thousand, the 2-d group is more than 84 thousand, the 3-rd group is about 30 thousand. About 48 thousand of the disabled are before 55 years old. Corresponding to disease for 1.01.01 hearing disabled is 2080 (children - 421, adults - 1659), visual – 3440 (children - 410, adults - 2929), wealcheaters - 2403 (children - 494, adults - 1909). For 1.01.01 ISR has revealed by research 202 people, who want to receive professional training. 100 of them are focused on a working trade, 102 - wish to act in middle and higher educational institutions. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there is a social demand for the professional educational programs for the invalids in area. It is reasoned, first, by increase of number of people with disabilities from year to year (2000 - 119411 people with disabilities, 2001- 139 000). ISR presupposes that in 3-5 years the number of people with disabilities in Novosibirsk area may become 200 thousand that will be 7% of the population of the area. Second reason for increasing the number of the disabled people, who want to have professional training, is a change of their motivation and public opinion about necessity of vocational training as a condition of the valid integration in the

society. In the summer 2001, to reveal the attitude of the population to problems, connected to education of the young people with special needs ISR offered a questionnaire. On a question "What does education give to people with disabilities?" - 72 % interrogated have answered - opportunity to develop themselves as the persons, opportunity to work, feeling of full value. On a question " What does higher education give to people with disabilities?" 80 % of the respondents have answered - opportunity to receive interesting work, opportunity to become the expert, to be ratified in life. It is necessary to emphasize that the answers of the healthy citizens and people with restrictions of physical health coincided.

The institute was organized 11 years ago by the order of Russian Government as rehabilitational and educational center for the disabled people. It is founded in Novosibirsk – a big scientific, cultural and historical center of Siberia. ISR NSTU is substantially autonomic. It functions on its training-laboratorial basis of NSTU. ISR is functioning as independent module of such complex institution as NSTU.

ISR is a continuous three-level system of organization of educational process. It allows carrying out selection and training from one professional level to another, up to the highest. The university complex provides, in one structure, training under the programs of last stage of secondary school and middle and higher vocational training. Today about 250 students have professional training on three levels: the 1st level - realizes the educational programs of last stage of secondary school and initial vocational training on four trades; the 2d level realizes the programs of middle vocational training on four professions with a certificate about middle general education after three years; the 3d level - higher vocational training on professions of the NSTU. The given system is a complex one, but there is prospect of development as downward "a school - kindergarten ", as upward - the wide choice of professions of university, after that Master and Doctoral programs are possible. The system is effective in respect of organization of training, statement of education, and realization of rehabilitation components in a united complex in conditions of "universal" base and staff. The system takes into account objective conditions and quality of school preparation of the disabled students, when, level of knowledge of many special schools does not meets the requirements even of initial vocational training, not speaking about middle and higher education. The process of training in ISR is not just education, but also rehabilitation and correction. It is aimed to improve physical state and also compensational opportunities. Together are directed to educational process, social and cultural development. The ISR model is based on performance of the scientific approaches in organization of pedagogical process. For example, personal approach, which means, that the purpose, main criterion of efficiency of pedagogical process - is the personality of the student. Activity approach, proved by A.N. Leont'ev, focused on successful integration of the graduates. The students are involved in various kinds of activity in the Institute, i.e. organize high-grade in the social and moral relation ability to live. The polysubjective approach means, that essence of the person is richer than his/her activity. ISR believes in unlimited opportunities of the students, who are capable to compensate primary defects. Such approach underlies organization and realization of educational process, social, psychological and other aspects, which should be directed on indemnification or elimination of restrictions of ability to live. The organization of pedagogical process includes medical and socio-cultural concepts of disabilities. Therefore, certainly ISR plays a sufficient role in regional policy of professional training for people with disabilities.

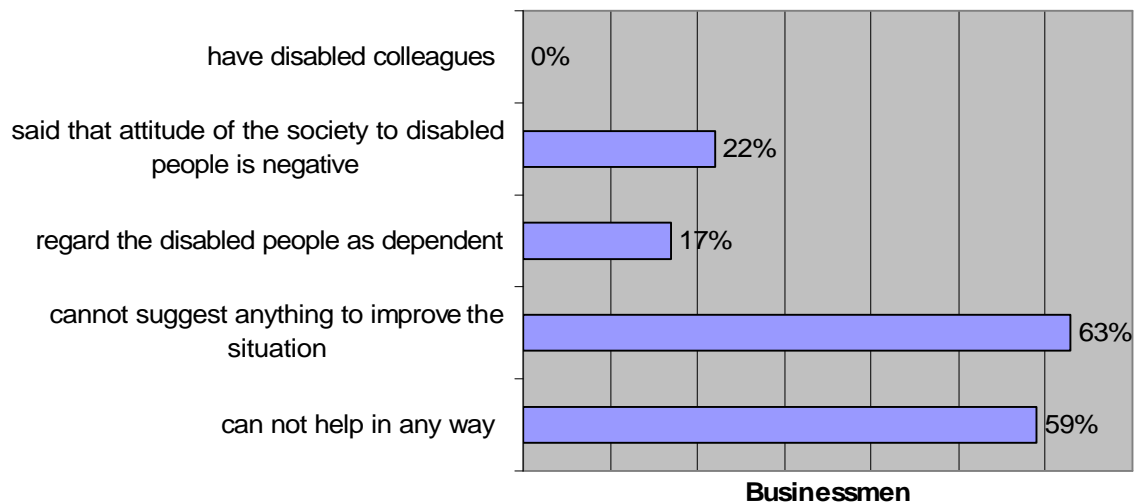
Conclusions.

These case studies reflected some comparatively successful universities, whereas it is nothing to tell about inclusiveness in a number of the rest. The research shows that many important things have been done lately and they are good premises for positive perspectives. It is sad that some innovations were left like in S. Petersburg Mechanical-Instrumental College. This situation is a result of the government's indifference to the initiative that had to be approved and supported.

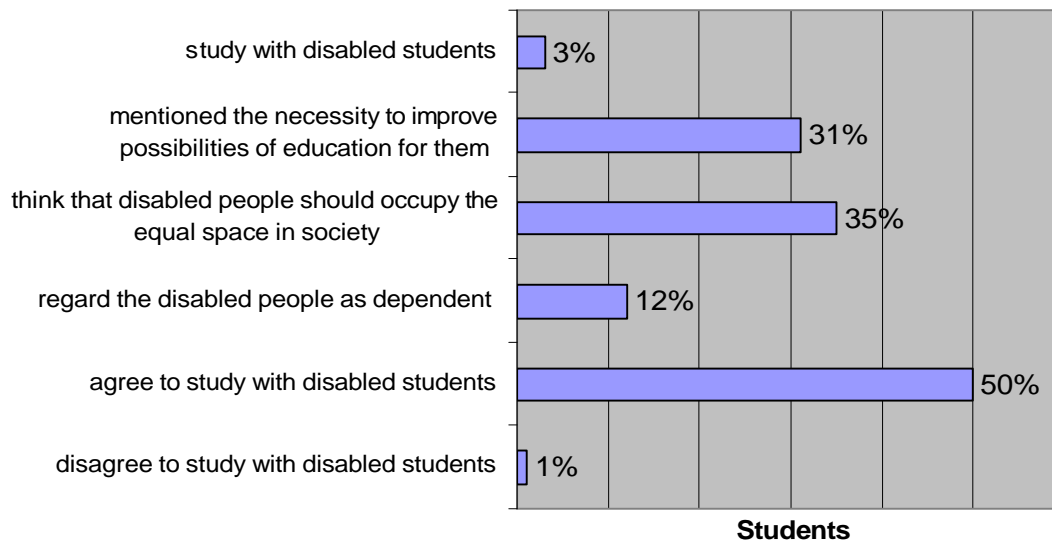
Although teachers and university administration may be sensitive to the problems of their disabled students and enthusiastic about inclusive education, the lack of the state's support does not help to succeed.

4. Cultural and Social Policies to People with Disabilities in Russia and Their Education.

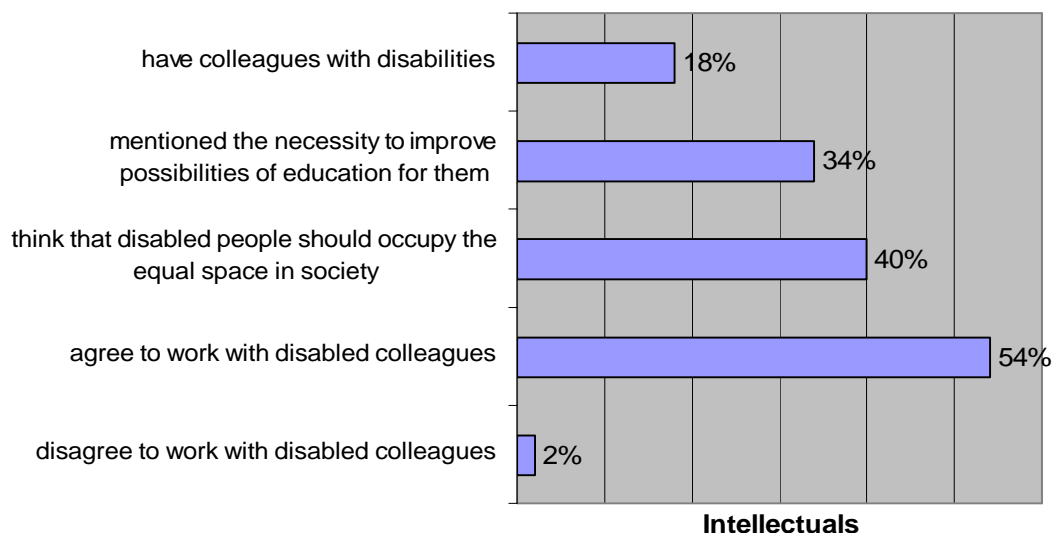
Reflecting on the case studies and current policy about inclusiveness, it is impossible to ignore the social and cultural attitudes inherited in the public mind. Besides financial factors it is also a powerful determiner of the policy. A few researches were made in this area, but their results clearly show that disabled people are excluded from the active life and are treated as helpless and dependent. One such researches were titled "Social View of Russian Invalid" (Vavilina N.D., the Laboratory of Socio-marketing Research of the Sociology and Social Policy Department, 2003). The research was initiated on demand of the Russian Society of the Disabled (ARSD). It included the group of 70 university students and senior pupils. Here is the analysis of the leader of the research with my additions: "1) The picture turned out very certain – all interviewed groups see disabled people as a group lacking any potential and totally unpromising group". The majority chooses such characteristics as sad, reserved, suspicious, unhappy, passive, and unsociable. An attitude of society toward the disabled is indifference, the society is not ready to include the disabled, less than a half in every group pointed on the necessity to increase access to education and changes to the city architecture. "Having such an image of disabled the society will never contribute to them". 2) While the major attitude to the disabled is compassion, rich category of people, therefore possible potential of financial help, - businessmen, shows more cool and even negative attitude.



If we consider specifically students group, 70 Novosibirsk students and senior pupils (potential university applicants) were interviewed. Despite the main characteristics of disabled people they named are unhappy, reserved, sad, passive, students are quite friendly to the others with disabilities.



For intellectuals, 68 interviewed chose for main characteristics for disabled people are sad, reserved, frank, responsive, kind, unhappy. The answers they gave corresponded to the next percentage:



As most people agree, the main reason for why the universities resist accepting the students with disabilities is financial: accessible environment, special pedagogical support, and technical equipment are quite expensive things for Russian universities now. And the image of the disabled does not inspire administrators to seek money for these changes.

Meanwhile, even the fact that the research printed above was ordered by society of people with disabilities shows that these people are interested in improving the situation. Besides, the group is quite a representative one and may have a real weigh in the society and politics.

In the summer 2001, to reveal the attitude of the population to problems, connected to education of the young people with special needs the Novosibirsk Institute of Social Rehabilitation (ISR) offered a questionnaire. On a question "What does education give to people with disabilities?" - 72 % interrogated have answered - opportunity to develop themselves as the persons, opportunity to work, feeling of full value. On a question " What does higher education give to people with disabilities? " 80 % of the respondents have answered - opportunity to receive interesting work, opportunity to become the expert, to be ratified in life. The research clearly shows that higher education is undoubtedly accepted as an important social value and necessary

mean for normal active life. It is essential to emphasize that the answers of the healthy citizens and people with restrictions of physical health coincided. It confirms that the people with disabilities have the same social valuables as mainstream people and just need some extra means to accomplish them.

Associations.

Often the great help in integration to the society and receiving professional training may be from non-governmental organizations and associations. The history of this kind of organizations in Russia is not very long. Only in the past ten years have Non Government Organizations (NGOs) been allowed to work in Russia. When NGOs were legalized, Russian disability organizations such as the ARSD began organizing people with disabilities. Now they are quite active in the social and cultural life of the society. At the Moscow conference in January 2004 of the net of associations in Russia, every association had to report about its activity during the last year on points of education, accessibility and employment. Ekaterinburg organization of people with disabilities "Free Movement" managed to obtain the Mayor's Order to open a new building for functioning only with commission including the Society representative. This means, that all the new buildings of the city will be accessible in reality with appropriate standards. The similar societies from Rostov and Vladimir successfully lobbied the regional law to be accepted about quota for local enterprises to employ people with disabilities. The Vladimir society organized mini-classes at home for children who can not study at school. This renovation brings some important benefits for home education. One of complaints about home education is a lack of communication and lack of team activity. In the case of mini-classes children have at least some coevals to communicate with; it is easier and more economically to organize the teaching process in such mini-classes; learning is more effective. Such results show good future trends for people with disabilities and inclusive education as well.

Conclusions.

The policies of inclusive higher education in Russia are at an early stage of development. On legislative level it includes providing necessary conditions for entering higher schools and receiving education, social protection and educational assistance. But these necessary conditions are not sufficient for effective inclusiveness. Not all the categories of disabled are covered by this protection; it is not always effective in reality, only a few universities offer a systematic service for disabled students.

The situation is inherited from the former socialist ideology of neglecting any deviation from the image of soviet people. Economical and financial crisis in the country aggravates the problematic situation in inclusive higher education. Consequently, the problems are mostly caused by financial and cultural aspects.

Nevertheless, efforts of last years on the organization of education for people with special needs, including professional education, made by the Ministry of Education of Russian Federation and other departments, universities and organizations are appreciable. It is remarkable, that first of all high schools and universities undertake training of students with special needs, offering them the program of higher vocational training. Some positive tendencies toward providing inclusive possibilities were started up. Thus on the university and local level a number of university services for the disabled students were established, universities have become more actively involved in regional and international networking and cooperation with local government and administration.

This activity on regional level forces the government to pay attention to the problem. Only in 2003 the Ministry of Education organized a number of important meetings and collegia for regional representatives on higher education system. A new project of additional training for the teachers of students with disabilities was initiated and tested in several sites of the country. At

the legislation level there were made several essential amendments towards architecture accessibility and social protection.

Unfortunately, some essential problems are not approached properly. For example, the information gap on all the levels is one of the crucial obstacles of inclusiveness. Recommendations may be to provide detailed information about disability opportunities at universities, including current and former disabled students interviews, entrance requirements and advantages. It will be more effective to spread this information in schools and colleges. Before inclusiveness is introduced at the school level, universities must take care about their potential students in providing full information, offering preparatory courses, building circumstances for continue inclusive education. Some universities like Novosibirsk State Universities, subordinating a broad pre-university substructure, definitely have these preconditions. Internet opportunities are still not in use as a rule, whereas they may be very strong tool in providing information, networking, and distance education.

This activity definitely must involve students' initiative. Disabled students' participation is a necessary condition for their success in studying and social life at the university. Disabled students organizations, involving mainstream students, teachers and university administrators is a good experience in other Western countries (...). Such organizations may benefit a lot by networking and grant raising, which as a rule attracts governmental attention and funding. Involving local government structures and organizations is very important for integration processes. At the ideological level real inclusiveness must involve changes in understanding disability. Disability in the majority of cases is created by circumstances. Changing circumstances and providing accessible environment will begin to address these issues.

In the view of this some questions necessarily raise for the future explorations: What are the perspectives for the future policies for inclusive higher education? How to change the existing negative public opinion toward disabled people in society? How to reorganize the system of education to provide possibilities for inclusiveness? How to attract the state and public attention to the problems?

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